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WHISPERINGS OF A ✦ WIND=HARP.

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WHISPERINGS OF A WIND-HARP

BY ANNE THROOP.

WITH A PROSE POEM INTRODUCTION BY

SADAKICHI HARTMANN.

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And her favorite page, dressed in black with the psychological awkwardness and erotic subtlety of some young Pre-Raphaelite maiden who for the first time has donned doublet and hose on the stage of life, scouring the country in search of such an instrument, came upon a dryad who with her white harp broke the ice of a frozen fountain where once, in soft lazulian days of yore, she and her argent playmates gamboled in roundelays and laughed their silvery laugh.

And as she lifted large cold pieces to the celadon sky and gazed as in a dream through their opalescent blankness, the page silently took the battered harp, and hastened back to the white naked rocks, and its turreted castle of gloom.

And the harp (not a door-harp that jingles whenever somebody enters, but a true wind-harp) hung in the castle hall, near a window flamboyant with decadent faith, sounded forth whenever a breeze passed by strange accords of vague suggestion, confused dreams in the dawn-colors of a soul not yet awakened to life; and on days when no wind stirred through the silent plains of art, it seemed that its delicate strings uttered sighs by their own inner vibration: white, desolate hopes of joy and pain.

The page's mistress was amused for a few short hours, but still gazed at the sea, the sky, and the fluttering birds. Many a knight and pilgrim came to the castle, where song is dying, and marvelled at the strange murmurings of the harp, but absorbed in the music of their own singing souls, none realized

what mad and loving dreams the harp might awake in sunnier climes.

The Jester had often mused, and as the summer stained with his kisses the barren land and tarnished the field with gold, he dryly remarked, "Why do you not carry the Wind-harp into the forest of warm liquid life? There, swinging among the swaying tree tops, with the winds running their joyous breath through the vibrant foliage, it may—if not broken by the storms of passion—reverberate the symphonies of Nature, so that people far and near will pilgrim on gray moonlit roads to the Forest of Life, and listen to the songs of the Wind-harp."

SADAKICHI HARTMANN.

A WIND-HARP.

WHEN my coveting soul first came
Into this light,
How could it hold the Earth's sweet guerdon
Of rich delight ?

Color and Joy and Glamor and Dance and Song,
And the Moon and Stars and Sun and Sea,
Sweet and heavy,—and sweet and heavy
The draught of Living for me !

Then all the wonderful, beautiful Winds swift stole,
Out from the clouds swift stole
And played on the harp of my Soul.
Color and Joy and Glamor and Dance and Song
Were their fingers free,
And their eyes were the Moon and Stars and Sun and
Sea—
The swing and whirr of the Earth
Their melody.

Gray and strong were their wings,
Or soft and of rainbow hue—
The languorous warmth ot the fruit-bearing Earth,
and the spur and the prescient joy of her cold
Were the breath they blew.

Laughter and bitter tears
From me they wrung,
Love and Grief, Darkness and Light,
Were the songs they sung.
But all so sweet,—not one to be lost, not one!

So with the Sun and the Sea in the Day for the eyes
of the Winds,
And the Moon and the Stars for the eyes of the Winds
of the Night—
With the passionate pulse of the throbbing strings as
they burn and glow and sway
From the fanning wings of the Winds,
And the touch of their hands,
As they pause at my harp in their flight—
Entranced and aglow at their wonderful lay
I stand, in the great Winds' wake;
Aglow,—as the mad strings break!

So how, with my world-wrenched, wind-broken harp
When I go from this Day and this Night,
How shall it bear the vibrance then
Of a vaster Delight?

Up from the snapping, distended strings
Sound—a new sound!—I had not heard,
Like the fluttering, palpitant, final note of a bird.
—Only the snapped string knows
The whole of a sound, unloosed, complete.—
Upward it goes, mingled and blent
In one fine note, the cries of the separate strings,—
As an overtone of my harp, long-pent,
Up, up,—and hovers and waits, as though for a
thinner æther, a wind more fleet,
A wind more singing and sweet and thin.

What is this Joy I am wandering in ?
Joy, a new Joy with the sound upsprings
From the finally-throbbed-out, gladly-spent strings.
As the change from sound to light may be clear,
So, for the spirit sense of an inner ear
As the inmost song of the sound, it sings ;
"I am the Life for thy new Light,
Beyond this Light.
The harp for the waves of the new Delight,
For the fingers of rarer Winds to play
Than played those old quivering strings away.
I shall endure their melody
As they pass singing miraculously.
I am thy Song of the Earth, made whole,
And the strong, new body for thy Soul ! "

THE MOON 'S A WITCH.

THE Moon 's a witch !
She has lived by herself, austere and cold,
And she knows all the mysteries ages old.
The heart called Love in her is dead,
But she wields a weird, subtle attraction instead,—
Oh, the Moon 's a witch !

She has let no heart on hers have play,
Though hearts from others she 's drawn away ;
'T is from them she 's learned the mysteries old,
But the price for this,—that her heart is cold,—
O poor, sad witch !

THE ELVES THAT DANCE IN THE DRIFTWOOD FIRE.

THE elves that dance in the driftwood fire
They know the sound of the mermaid's lyre,
And they have rattled the bones, perdie,
That are mixed with the coral in the sea.

Oh, the tales in the driftwood fire!

And one flame red, and one flame blue,—
The one is for palm, the other for rue,
The one for peace, and the other for woe,—
Ho! Ho!—the elves in their dancing go.

The merry and sad old driftwood fire!

THE GREAT GRAY ROCK AND THE SEA.

"HA, HA! your waves cannot cover me!"
Said the Great Gray Rock to the Sea;
And the Summer-wind soothes her effort by,
But the Winter comes with his hue and cry,
"Ho, ho, you have covered the Rock!" cries he.
But the Summer again makes the Gray Rock free.

"Ah, ha!" mocks the Rock,
But the smiling Sea croons quietly.

"I am not worn nor less," says the Sea.
"But what has changed the Rock?" quoth she,
"Who has changed the face of the Rock but the Sea?"
Is your base, Gray Rock, well set and sure?
For the lure of the Sea is a subtle lure;
"My heart is the love of all hearts," breathes she.

"Oh, I am pliant and sweet,
Vehement, passionate, wild,
My patient, pitiless fingers I wreathe
About you—warm stupors of scent in my long hair breathe—
I will carry you into my heart," says the Sea,
"To be in my heart to Eternity,
For that is my love—is the love of the Sea!"

Which is the stronger, the Strong or the Sweet?

Ha! the Great Gray Rock has loved the Sea!
Loved the passionate fingers for Life or Death,
And the whirling hair, with its flower-breath,
And the heaving bosom of the Sea;
And he at last in her bosom shall be
Lulled and loved to Eternity.

Oh, the love of the Strong for the Sweet!
Ah, the joy of the love of the Sea,
And the lull and rest in her heart that be!

THE STRANGE OLD MAN OF THE SEA.

"WHO at the window beckons and beckons,
You—is it you—coming back for me?"
Out on the sands through the mist and grayness,
Goes the pale, old form of the Man of the Sea.

A phantom breath is in the hallways,
Oppressive and near till she turns to see—
Some haunting mock of the pitiless Sea Man,
Out of the depths of his Charnel Sea.

In a high, bare room with long sash-windows
The moths lie dead from long-dead flames,
The wind stirs a cobweb in the rafters,
Dry leaves blow through the window frames.

The king-bird has left her nest in the eaves' ledge,
Her young are as strong with their wings as she,
The summer is waiting the knock of autumn,
But no knock comes from the drowned in the sea.

"High in my room with the summer-dance
Of light and shade from the sash thrown wide,
The wind blows my thin dress out on the floor,
And swishes the soft young leaves outside.

"The dark is making the wave-curves black,
The king-bird has gone to his sleeping mate;
At last I hear your step at the door,—
It was long to wait.

"The moths flick the candle with their wings,
The folds of my scarf from my shoulders fall;
I have wound in its meshes your neck and hair, —
Despite you were so tall!

"A gust has blown the candle out,
The cobweb in the rafters tears,
The dead moths blow in a heap to my feet,
The gust sweeps past me down the stairs,

"A shudder and chill are in the room,
And in the place of the elfin light
The dry leaves shake in the shadows instead;
I am here alone with the dark to-night."

The washed dank seaweed on the rocks
Is like drowned dead men's hair
That the Strange Old Man with his fingers combs,
Who steals what the earth counts fair.

"I come again to the smouldering fire,
The lamp goes flickering at the door;
Yon call me!—A touch is on my eyelids,
Surely your step was over the floor.

"No one may find the Gaoler's key!
It was only the touch of the hand of the mist,
I heard the moan of the Wraith of the Sea,
The wind went past me over the floor;
My dead may never come back to me.

"And so some day they shall take me away,
And I shall hear the roar of the Sea,
And the Strange Old Man shall bury me."

THE SONG OF THE EARTH-BORN.

THE Earth has told me a strange, strange tune,
Out of her bosom,—
Her rune, her rune ;—

Only to hear it, and sing all day
That is my play,—my play.

To hear it, and weep all night
Is my plight, is my plight.

Soon she her wonderful sleep will give ;—
I sing and wail ;—
I live, I live !

THE STUBBLE FIELD.

I WENT one day to a far off land,
Some Land of Life with a wide, white day,
Of those countries where men's wishes go,
But mist-clouds veil the journeying way.

I went to the Landowner then and asked
Why men were barred from going there ;
Why, when their hearts so loved and wished,
The mist-clouds rose where their feet would fare.

The Landowner smiled and took my hand,
And led me away to a dusk, lone place,—
He let me rest at his feet, and then
To the day we had left he turned my face.

Then he told me about a Stubble-field
That was near us there in the lonely gloom,
Where the stubble he wished uprooted
To give his choking flowers room.

And I listened to what he was telling me,
Of the pitiful flowers that could not grow,
But I still cared little about this field,
For the distant mystical Daylight's glow.

But while I looked a great cloud rose,
And soon stood so dim a wall between,
That, sighing, at last I turned my head
Towards this place we had reached, but I had not seen.

Then the Landowner laughed and touched my eyes,
And the mist was the Ether about the World,—
"They would never notice my Stubble-field,
If the colors of Daylight were kept unfurled!"

AN ALIEN.

I STOOD beneath the Bridge of the World
By a still, deep River's bed,
And heard the beat of the hurrying feet
Of the Living joining the Dead.

I stood so near to Nature's heart
I knew her secrets well,—
Her rest aloof from the sad World's woof
In the web of its heaven and hell.

I dreamed of the Nature of long ago,
When the good god Pan was young,
When reasoning thought and problems were
naught,
All was lived and loved and sung.

The River flowed with a secret on,
Its secret that all might know,
If they 'd leave their strife for the gilt of life,—
For the Peace that is deep below.

Then the River called, and I followed on,—
I heard the sweet birds sing,—
And the wind : that blew the secrets through
The leaves and the loves of Spring.

The Summer came, and the world was gone ;
I had strayed to the river's start,
Where it rippled and sang and trembling sprang
Straight from the warm Earth's heart.

So I rested there and in wonder stayed
Breathless and still with delight,
And bathed my feet in the dappled sweet
Till it gave me a strange, wild might.

But I came back to the World again
With its lonely, dusking light,
With its sobbing wind of the days that
sinned
And buried themselves in the night.

The love of the World comes never again
To those who have seen Life's face,
But to love the light, and the warm black night
And the breath of the wind's embrace.

Yet here again, in the midst of the World,
Are the days when Pan was young,
And I listen and dream, and ever the stream
Sings the Earth-Mother's secret tongue.

BIRD-SONG.

OH, little bird, you drive me mad
With that, your joyful song,
You take me back to what I love,
And things for which I long,—

That inner joyful note of yours
Tells of your home and mate,
But mine may never come to me
However long I wait.

Oh, little bird, in your sweet song,
Can you not tell to me
Why, in this glad time of the year
I may not happy be?

THE DEAD SUMMER.

I SAT with the warm, kind Summer
In the glimmering, misty air,
There passed me the brown September
With draggled black leaves in her hair.

The Summer clasped and kissed me,
Lingered, then strayed apart—
And I found him dead in September's day
With draggled black leaves on his heart.

BECAUSE THE TIME TO WAIT IS LONG.

BECAUSE the time to wait is long,
And that the earth is very fair,
It seems strange I must stay at all
With only gray-ash thoughts to spare.

Because the Summer-time is past
With all its wealth of warmth and love,
To me the year is nothing now
But griefs and griefs to rise above.

To clamber up the slippery way,
To look the pale things in the face;
And each day know so little done
To make more small the stretching space.

And yet I know will come an eve,—
And its dusk flowers will seem most fair,—
That with its gentle, pitying breath
Will blow its shadow on my hair.

And in its kindly, closing gloom,
Gathering the dusky flowers frail,
Their path shall lead me back to find
Again the old-time Summer's trail.

I KNEW THAT THE LOVE OF MY LIFE WAS DEAD.

I KNEW that the Love of my Life was dead,
Dead with a wide, cold empty stare;
I saw him lying there,
Quiet and stark and fair.

Oh, make him a casket of sweet wild rose,
And bury him deep!
I cannot think of these earth-pale woes,
Bury him deep!

Bury him deep in the soft, cool ground—
The day is gray—
The wind was making a singing sound—
It has blown away.

THE GATES OF NIGHT.

WIND-BLOWN down the paths of Nature,
Hand in hand ;—
God, let it happen !—
Light of the moon, and blue mist shimmering on
the darkened trees.
Still and invisible swing the gates of Night.
What moment we pass in we know not till we find
Breaths of new secrets blown in that new Land.

OUT OF THE WONDERFUL EAST.

OUT of the wonderful East
Radiant, strange he came,
With the light of his orient eyes
And his mind a spirit flame.

Climbing and climbing we went—
How calm and white and grand !
Up to the snow topped peaks,
To the silent cloud capped land.

Colors over the snow—
Purple and yellow and red—
Transparent luminous atmosphere
From a spirit-aura shed.

Ah, how the lightnings flash !
How the currents stir my soul !
The climax reached of a pinnacled joy
Beyond despair's control.

The sombre joy of the peaks
Pictured in changeless light,
And his blown black hair in the glow of the sky
Is graven beyond the night.

THE SONG OF THE WIND.

YE who hear my soulless crying,
Mocking, dying,—
Look ye, close below my flying,
Rolls the Sea of Tears.

Ye who see me flower-heads lifting,
Perfume sifting,
Think ye of the ships that, drifting,
Scud to the Fog of Fears.

Woe, woe
All the World is Woe,
Fear and woe—
Weeping
Underneath her sleeping,
The sweat of the Fear-Fog quaffing
With her laughing—
—laughing, laughing—

Laughter—laughter
Seek ye after.

Oh, a snare, in Pleasure, of Care!—
—Care—

My breath is the voice of the World,
In my strength Weal or Woe is hurled,
From my wings Joy and Fear are whirled—
From the Sky where dwell Joy and Fear.

Mighty in drearness,
Awful in clearness,
Is the Great Fear.

Loving with Night-time,
Laughing with Day-time,
Is the Great Joy.—

The World is the Mortal
Happy or grieving,
As her Will works for her
I am the Will of her,
Singing or sighing,
Helping or hindering,
Praying, believing—
She is the Mortal
Fearful or jubilant,
As the Sky speaks to her—

The World in her heart lives,
I from her heart blow,
To her the Sky gives.

Swoop—swoop!—
Hoo—oo, my tall pine trees,
How I go through you!
How I love you my straight pine trees,
I have forgotten the sky.

Hoo—hoo !
Tall pine trees—tall pine trees,
Where are you— ah, my tall pine trees—
When I am in the sky ?—
Hoo—ha ha !

Singing, singing !—
The earth is singing,
Seas and forests shout !
With maddening rout,
The sinuous, foam-haired mermen plunge and rush
To keep pace with my gold-fleeced sheep
That I drive to their folds on some far-off
And ambered peaks,
Where the deep Joy sits like a hush
Of sleep.—
Sleep !
Earth is weeping,
Weeping, weeping—
Oh ! ho ho !
Jubilant, jubilant, jubilant go,—
Who heeds care with the Sun-winds blowing ?
Who is it recks of the Sun's two specks
Of Fear and Woe ?—
Woe—
All the World is Woe—

A RUDDERLESS BOAT.

OH, I have been given a rudderless boat
Without or sheet or sail,
But I am never afraid or lost
In midnight or in gale.

For either side beneath my boat
Hands hold it by the keel;—
They know the way and the Over-Seas Port,
They know my woe or weal.

And ever if the waves have seemed
To roll in fathoms high,
There is a laughing in their foam,
A lulling as they die.

When I seemed drifting out, the World
Two oars had offered me,
But I could only laugh at such
For such a stormy Sea.

For striking out for the open waste
Away from the World's "safe" shores,
Not even good ballast in my boat
Would be her "prudent" oars.

Oh ho, Oh ho,—for the poor old World
That thought I was her child!—
For I was restless with love of the stars
And strangely Sea-beguiled.

The Sun and Stars and Sea are kin
And carry their children between,
The Stars in their deep silences,
The Sea that holds their sheen.

And when the Sea is smooth and clear
And all the Sky is fair,
The water dabbling my hands will match
The Sun's shine on my hair.

"Ah, ha!" says the World, "in boats like yours
There are other than storms to meet,—
There are pirate vessels on those high seas
And glaring death of heat."

But thieves and other skulking craft
Are seldom far at sea—
And if they were, not one would be worth
A single fear from me.

For the Sun,—if he grew too fiercely glad
At his face in the heart of the Sea
In such a love,—to die of light,—
Death Phœnix-joy might be.

So what if sometime like the foam I float,
My hair for seaweed brown,—
The stars will watch me into port
Or watch where I go down.

For though the Farthest Shore is fair,
I do not fear the Sea,
And I would go down with my poor, vain boat
To the Land where the lost ships be.

And if I may not yet find the Port
And again must be buried by Time,
I have had one magic of Sea and Sky
That summoned, unquestioned, sublime.

OUT OF THE WONDER HOUSE.

A WHITE mist wound about the house,
White and cold,
Till the pale streaks,
In rainbow colors, stretched across the skies
And kissed aurora's gold.

In a high tower apart,
Dream swept and still,
A Maiden lay in the wonder house;
Cool breaths crept over her eyes and mouth,
As the dawn streaks climbed the hills.

Out of the casement wide,
In the soft pink
The moon, fading and gibbous, hung.
"Is it a sign" she said
"Dawn—and a white moon dead?"
She crept her shivering down the stair
"How is it in the fields instead?
My tower is so bare."

In the dawn-cold, green gold grass she stood,
Laughed in the thin new air,
About her feet the jewelled cobwebs shone;
"Now will that thorny, pulsing life,
I dreamed, be mine?"
Slow in the East, the gold sun's burnished
chalice rose
And splashed the red day's wine.

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BY ANNE THROOP

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